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# Barring The Post

By Donnie Radcliffe

The White House this weekend banned The Washington Post from covering three social events given by President and Mrs. Nixon.

Indications were that the ban would remain in force until after Mr. Nixon's inauguration on Jan. 20, 1973.

Yesterday, Howard Simons, managing editor of The Washington Post, commented:

"I'm dismayed . . . if this is true . . . that the White House would act this way toward The Washington Post when social events at the White House are so much a part of our community in the news."

He said the policy would not affect the newspaper's assigning of reporters to cover forthcoming White House activities.

"We will continue as best we are able to cover such events," Simons said.

Repeated attempts by The Washington Post last night to obtain White House clarification of the ban were unsuccessful. However, presidential press secretary Ronald L. Ziegler did respond to United Press International reporter Helen Thomas, who yesterday reported that the White House had "cut off" The Washington Post from covering the Nixons' social events.

She noted that the exclusion follows the Post's "heavy play" of the bugging of the Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate here, and of alleged political espionage and sabotage against the Democrats in this year's campaign.

Ziegler told Miss Thomas that pool coverage of White House social events "is determined on an invitation basis and I have no comment about the fact that The Washington Post has not been invited to participate . . . nor do I have any comment on any conclusions UPI wishes to draw on the matter."

Ziegler also said "The Washington Post is one of many newspapers in this

country and has no special prerogatives to participate in pool coverage at the White House."

One White House source told Post reporter Dorothy McCardle, who was assigned to cover the three events, but was restricted to the press lobby, that two White House factions were in conflict over the policy.

Indications of the new White House policy surfaced Friday, when Mrs. McCardle arrived at the White House to cover a reception given by the Nixons for what were described as "New Majority" supporters.

She was informed that a "pool" of five reporters had been designated to cover the reception but that she and five other reporters were not among them. (A White House spokesman explained

later that it had been necessary to restrict the number of reporters because of the large guest list of 600.)

Saturday evening, Mrs. McCardle again arrived at the White House, this time assigned to cover a black-tie dinner the Nixons were giving for past, present and future Cabinet officers.

Once again she was informed that a "pool" of six reporters had been chosen but that she was not among them. No other reporter was excluded Saturday evening.

A White House spokesman told Mrs. McCardle, a veteran reporter who has covered White House social events under five administrations, that her exclusion was not personal.

Yesterday, Mrs. McCardle returned to the White House to cover a worship service at which John Cardi-

nal Krol of Philadelphia officiated.

Again she was informed that she had not been included in the "pool" of 10 reporters and, with a late-arriving journalist who had failed to pick up his credentials in time to join the pool, sat out the services in the West Side Press Lobby.

A "pool" of reporters for White House social events is not uncommon. But in the past, reporters from all Washington newspapers were included in all pools.

Today Mrs. McCardle is assigned to the White House to cover the Nixons as they entertain children of foreign diplomats.

Mrs. McCardle has been informed that she will be excluded from the event.